The Logger's Bark

RADIO CLUB of TACOMA

February 2015 **Volume 11, Issue 2** **© 2015 Radio Club of Tacoma**

Howdy colleagues,

We're halfway through February and it is beginning to feel like Spring every so often.

It was a balmy Saturday morning on February 7 when many stalwart club members went down to Owen's Beach for the annual get-together in the wintery weather. See the photos beginning on Page 7.

Upcoming next month at the Puyallup Fairgrounds, RCT will have two tables at the Mike and Key Swap meet. The Property Management Team has culled some of the Club's surplus items and will be offering them for sale. Be sure to stop by and visit. And RCT will have an information booth upstairs also. If you need a place to sit down for awhile, stop in and offer to 'mind the store' for a bit!

Club Vice President Mike W7XTX has donated a large W7DK patch and two $25 HRO gift certificates to the club for raffle prizes at the monthly meetings. Be sure to tell him 'thanks' and show your support by spending a couple of bucks to buy tickets. Remember, the raffle tickets automatically make you eligible to be a winner at the annual awards banquet.

Attaboys to Bruce WB7EC for his hard work in wiring the new patch panel upstairs in the HF room. It is going to be a big step forward in facilitating flawless antenna selection, no matter what station or location from which you are operating. And thanks to Al N7OMS and Jim KE7PVZ for their contributions to the project.

It is time to start planning for this year's Field Day, and for the W7DK Centennial Event coming up in 2016. If you are interested and want to help, or have ideas you want to share, please contact any Club officer or Board Member.

OK, that's all for now. 73 de Mike W7MWF

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Board of Directors Meeting
7 January 2015 Minutes

The Radio Club of Tacoma Board meeting was held at the Radio Club of Tacoma. Officers and board members present:

President	Gary McAdams WG7X
Vice President	Mike Mikuchonis W7XTZ
Secretary	Larry Watson KD4VOM
Treasurer	David Andresen W7HTJ
Board Member	Bruce Hanson WE7P
Board Member	Mike Finnie W7MWF
Board Member	Al Ferguson N7OMS

There were 17 names on the attendance roster a copy of which is attached to the original minutes

Quorum: Yes

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm by President Gary McAdams WG7X.

Minutes:

The minutes of the December 2014 Board Meeting as distributed and coordinated, were approved without objection or correction.

HEALTH AND WELFARE: Greta reports on possible surgery for Charles Smith AE7BM

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Bank Statements	QSO Cards
Utility and Phone Bills	Newsletters
Newsletters	Subscriptions

TREASURER'S REPORT: David W7HTJ circulated the December 2015 financial report.
A copy of the financial report is attached to the original copy of these minutes.

Property Insurance Issue: David pointed out that, in all likelihood, we are under insured on our property, and that could mean we would be more at risk for any replacement costs not covered. David is arranging a meeting with our property policy manager along with Bruce Hansen WE7P and VP Mike Mikuchonis W7XTZ to address the issue.

Financial Account Reconciliation: David thanked the crew, especially Mike Finnie W7MWF who were responsible for resolving financial account accounting errors, and bringing the reconciliation of our accounts into balance at the end of last year.

Annual Financial Review: Larry KD4VOM reviewed the bylaws requirements, rationale and scope of the required annual financial review, and solicited volunteers to conduct the review.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Membership: George reports the membership stands at near 348.
Membership renewals are coming in around 75 so far.
Renewal Grace Period: George pointed out the issues involved by allowing a three month grace period, which de facto seems to set up a financial year different from our calendar year. Changes to the Bylaws seem a reasonable solution.

Training: Next Technician's Class January 10/11 2015
General Class: There was an impromptu discussion of the need for a General Class. Several Board members indicated a willingness to work on getting a class started.

Information Technology: – Randy Myers WB4SBP
The IRLP replacement computer is all but ready to put on line, awaiting only some programming and setup.

HF Operations: Operational

Patch Panel: Bruce Cranefield WB7EC continues to work on the club's HF antenna feed line and patch panel, to make use of new cable runs installed by Rich KR7W.

Straight Key Night: Rich KR7W and Randy WB4SPB provided a summary of Straight Key night. Kudos were offered to Pat and Sooz who adeptly handle the CW Bingo game. Thanks also to Rich, Randy, and many others, including those who brought deserts and such.

ARRL Soapbox Article: Rich KR7W has posted an ARRL Soapbox article with photos at: http://www.arrl.org/soapbox/view/910 If the link doesn't close search for W7OS in the search box.

Tower Inspection: Rich KR7W who has climbed our tower several times recommended we secure the services of a professional tower evaluator to determine the condition and maintenance needs. Rich and Tim will contact Nick K7MO, and or others to identify licensed professionals and secure an estimate for the evaluation.

Repeaters: Tim White K7TMW Provided an update on a recent visit to the Crawford Mountain 147.38 repeater where rat damage was found and repaired.
W7DK 147.28 Repeater: Tim reported on recent realignment and tuning for this repeater as well
Service Monitor: Tim reports that the service monitor loaned by Bob K7MXE may require repair.

Repeater Status:
W7DK 145.21 Repeater, Bates Channel 28: Tuned --Operational
W7DK 147.28 Repeater Clubhouse: Status – Repaired - Operational
W7DK 147.38 Repeater Crawford Mountain: Status – Operational, awaiting installation of the 440 MHz control unit
W7DK 440.625 Repeater Clubhouse Status – Operational
IRLP 147.28 Repeater) Operational

Facilities Management:
Bruce WE7P suggested we plan to repair the damaged eyebrow fascia and close off the area to squirrel access to the eaves.

Property Management:
Mike W7MWF reports diminished inventory activity over the holidays, plans to resume the property inventoryhttp://www.arrl.org/soapbox/view/9105, focusing on the inside assets.

Antique Gear Donation: Mike reported on an extensive antique gear donation by Richard Wolfe W7JHU, which seems in good cosmetic condition, and is awaiting operational evaluation.

General Membership Meeting Program for 14 January; Dave W7UUU
QSO Cards, the history, fun and loads of examples

Workshop Project:
28 January: Possibly a training session for the Winter Field Day ARDF-Bunny Hunting.
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Museum: Rich KR7W No Report

Attention all hands

Please remember to send in your dues to renew your membership promptly. It helps us budget for the upcoming year's activities.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

RCT Financial Planning: Ken Gibson N7ELF apologizes for his business conflicts and suggested a smaller group meeting. David Andresen W7HTJ, Al Ferguson N7OMS, Peter Baker AD7EU, Mike Finnie W7MWF, Randy Myers WB4SPB and Mike Mikuchonis W7XTZ agreed to coordinate a meeting with Ken, Larry will send an email to all recommending they set up a time and place to meet. The goal being a recommendation to the Board.

NEW BUSINESS:

Regular and Recurring Expenses:
A motion was made, seconded and passed to authorize the Treasurer to pay RCT regular and normal expenses.

Annual Appointments: The President made the following appointments for 2015

Parliamentarian: Peter Baker AE7EU
Newsletter Editor: Mike Finnie W7MWF
Website Administrator: Joe Lester K7ZG
Education Coordinator: Stephen Morton AD7AB
Museum Curator: Rich Patrick KR7W
Club Historian: Larry Watson KD4VOM
Librarian: Doug Oakman AD7AV
Additional appointments are contained in the 2015 Appointment List

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FYBO: 7 Feb 2015 place and final plans under development
Attaboys:
2014 Awards Banquet: The Board takes this opportunity to thank the following for making our Awards Banquet special

Anne Ellison N7ANN
Dave Ellison W7UUU
Leonard Burstiner KA7NWF
Janice and Larry Watson KD4VOM
Terri and Mike Buettner K7STO
Maul MatneyW7PFU
Bob Purdom AD7LJ

The meeting was adjourned at 20:10

General Membership Meeting
14 January 2015 Meeting Notes

The General Membership meeting was held at the Pierce County Library Administration Building at Waller Road and 112th Street. .

Vice President Mike Mikuchonis W7XTZ called the meeting to order at 7:28 PM.

Officers and board members present:

Vice President	Mike Mikuchonis W7XTZ
Secretary	Larry Watson KD4VOM
Board	Mike Finnie W7MWF
Board	Nick Winter K7MO

A sign in sheet with the names of members and guests is attached to the original copy of these minutes. There were 33 names on the attendance roster.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Was led Vice President Mike Mikuchonis W7XTZ

INTRODUCTIONS: Welcoming of guests and self-introductions were completed. There were several first time visitors and newly minted/upgraded hams attending.

ILLNESS OR SILENT KEY: Mary Keen, Armin N7JAJ's wife lost her battle with cancer 10 January.

Correspondence:

Newsletters
Bank Statements
Newsletters
Utility Bills
Membership Renewals

The Field Day Pig was circulated to collect donations for Field Day operations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Membership: George K7GRS provided a membership estimate of 348,
About one third of our renewals have been received and processed

George encouraged members to get their renewals in, and to submit the attached survey form. The survey is an interest form, not a commitment, and is intended to help club managers respond to member's interests. George also asked for a show of hands on the use of nicknames in regular club correspondence. The majority were in favor.

V E Report: John Clarke AC7WW
January 13th 2015 six Volunteer Examiners of the Radio Club of Tacoma had seventeen candidates at a testing session held at the RCT clubhouse. Thirty one elements were graded with seventeen being passed. License class's earned were eight Technicians, three Generals that passed elements two and three, one candidate upgraded to General and two candidates upgraded to Extra. Three candidates failed to obtain an initial license.

We had candidates from Bonney Lake, Buckley, Gig Harbor, Olympia, Port Orchard, Puyallup, Tacoma, University Place and England.

Thanks to the Volunteer Examiners for their time and effort.

Leonard, KA7NWF
Gary, K7EK
Stephen, AD7AB
Jan, K7HTU
Rich, KK7VH

The next scheduled testing session will be February 10, 2015.

Training:
Next Technicians Class January 7-8

HF Station: Randy WB4SPB – Work continues on the HF system patch panel

Repeaters: Larry KD4VOM reported on the Repeater teams visit at Crawford Mountain 147.38 repeater where they found rodent damage to an audio board. The board was replaced, and the repeater is working well again. There is also a discussion to consider a vertical antenna in place of the existing Yagi. The Repeater team have also done some tune up work on the 147.28 clubhouse repeater and reports are that it too is working much better.

Facilities: No Report.

Property Management: Mike Finnie W7MWF
Mike reports that the storage inventory has been completed and documentation will follow. Next up, the inventory of Club assets in the clubhouse.

The Club received a generous donation of several vintage items which appear to be in

good condition. Evaluation will follow, and some may be added to our Museum holdings.

PROGRAM: The Art, Practice, and FUN of creating and exchanging QSL Cards – Dave Ellison W7UUU

Dave provided a presentation including the early history of QSL cards, and several historic samples. QSL cards are "The final courtesy" to acknowledge an amateur radio contact. Moreover they are an essential part of the many contesting and various awards that amateurs worldwide compete for and collect.

While electronic log programming and QSL processes have merit, especially in their speed, paper cards continue to be a source of enjoyment and pride. While there are literally thousands of companies that will provide printed cards with endless graphics and art work, making your own can be even more satisfying.

Dave explained the key information required on each card if it is to provide a formal record of the contact.
Following the presentation, Dave circulated some of his best cards, as did several others who brought portions of their collections to share with others. Two albums of cards from the W7DK archives were circulated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Freeze Your Buns Off: Randy WB4SBP
This year again the annual FYBO QRP field day will be held Saturday, February 7th at the shelter at Owen's Beach at Pt. Defiance Park. An ARDF/Bunny hunt will be included. Dress warmly and come join the fun

Workshop: 28 January Rich KR7W will present an orientation to Amateur Radio Direction Finding, (ARDF), aka Bunny Hunting/ Hidden Transmitter Hunt.

RCT Centennial Celebration: Planning is getting underway, all are invited to participate in the planning for our 100 year anniversary, See any Board members, or Larry KD4VOM

DISCUSSION TOPICS:

TUNING AND TRAFFIC:

Mike K7STO noted the Society for the Preservation of Amateur Radio is also holding a winter field day on January 24th /25th. See link for details. Mike plans a short session from Yelm to log some contacts…
http://www.spar-hams.org/contests/winterfd/index.ph

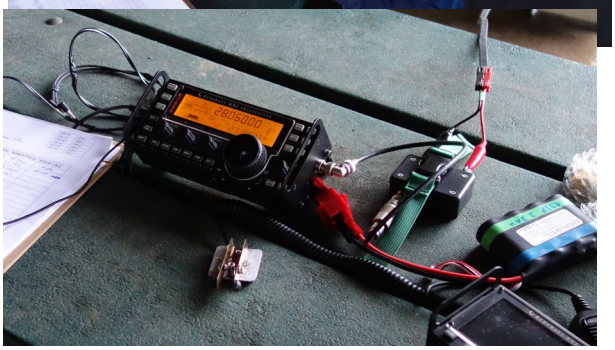
DOOR PRIZES: David Sharpe W7GCA picked up tonight's Door Prize
Larry Watson KD4VOM picked up the Yeasu 530 HT raffle prize

The meeting was adjourned at 9:14 pm

W7DK WINTER EVENT

On the morning of February 7, for the umpteenth time the intrepid members of the Radio Club of Tacoma gathered at Owen Beach for our annual Winterfest. This year, as in the past, we participated in the FYBO (Freeze Your Buns Off) QRP contest. Concurrently, Rich KR7W sponsored a hidden transmitter (ARDF) hunt.

It was a balmy 49 degrees when we started up early on Saturday morning. Three antennas were erected for three separate transmitters. Bunnies were scattered throughout Pt. Defiance Park. Coffee was brewed, and the rain drizzled down.



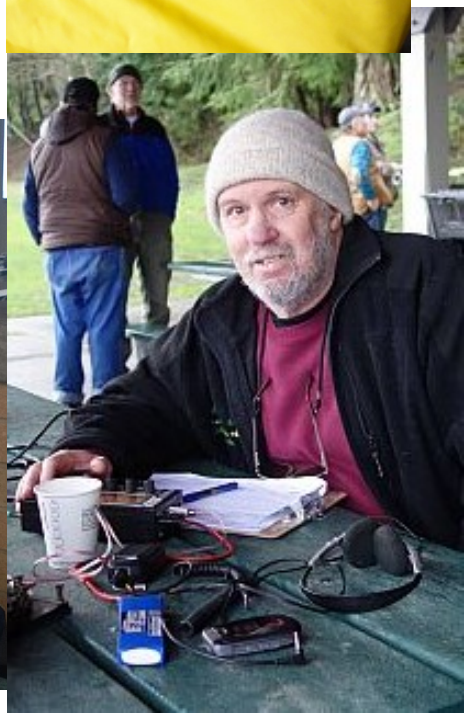
Overall, it was a most successful event, attended by well over 3 dozen club members and guests.

24 QSOs were accomplished with 20 unique States, including 2 contacts with the sponsoring club in Arizona, NQ7RP. Our final score was tabulated at 5960 points. Bunnies were located after some slipping and sliding down muddy hillsides. And Chef Paul treated us to a big pot of Elk Chili to ward off the chills.

Thanks to all who participated and supported this popular event. And special thanks to David W7HTJ, Randy WB4SPB, and Whit KG7LNZ for their photo contributions.

ANT
ATTENUATION
LESS
FAR
CLOSE
4 MHZ OFF-SET

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
WASHINGTON DC



With Just a WSPR

Guest Column By Dan Romanchik, KB6NU

It's really amazing what you can do with computers in amateur radio, and there's been an explosion in the number of digital modes. One interesting mode that I've recently been introduced to is WSPR, which is short for Weak Signal Propagation Reporting. The protocol and the original WSPR program was written by Joe Taylor, K1JT, and is designed for sending and receiving low-power transmissions on the HF bands to test propagation paths.

I won't try to cover all the technical details here. There are several sites that cover them pretty well:

* Wikipedia: WSPR (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WSPR_%28amateur_radio_software%29)
* G4ILO's Shack: WSPT - Distant Whispers (http://www.g4ilo.com/wspr.html)

I was introduced to WSPR by my friend, Joe, AC8ES. He posted a message to our club mailing list asking if anyone had a toroid core that he could buy to make a QRP balun for 10 MHz. When I asked what he was going to use it for, he said that he was making a WSPR transmitter with a Raspberry Pi, and the balun was for the dipole he built for it. He said that he'd gotten roped into doing this because he'd attended a local Raspberry Pi users' group, and when he mentioned he was an amateur radio operator, they encouraged him to try this project.

How could I refuse a request like that? I have a whole kit of ferrite cores, and after some back and forth, we found a small core that he could use.

The software he chose is WsprryPi (https://github.com/JamesP6000/WsprryPi). It's described a "Raspberry Pi transmitter using NTP-based frequency calibration." It uses a GPIO port to generate WSPR signals anywhere from 0 to 250 MHz. Joe said that there are several Raspberry Pi programs that run WSPR, but that he chose this one because it seemed to have more features than the others.

Figure 1 shows Joe's setup. Since the output generates a square wave, a low-pass filter is needed to filter out the high-frequency components. As you can see, the GPIO output is fed through a 0.1uF decoupling capacitor into a Mini-Circuits 10.7MHz low-pass filter, then to a 1:1 balun, which is connected directly to the dipole elements.

Joe says, "The antenna is just a dipole taped up to the walls of my living room and hallway." As you can see he made the balun and dipole from 24 ga speaker wire.

The performance of this setup has been kind of amazing. In one e-mail, Joe reported, "Your toroid seems to be working well. Got the balun and antenna finished and executed seven WSPR transmissions from the Raspberry Pi. The WSPR reporting website WSPRnet (http://wsprnet.org) came back with a couple dozen reception reports; typical distance is ~300+ miles, max was 593 miles." In a second e-mail, Joe writes, "Did a few more beacon transmissions and checked the WSPR signal reports again. Someone picked up my 5 mW signal from 1010 miles away in Canada."

Joe's turned into quite a WSPR fan. He's even written an Android app - WSPRnet Viewer (https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.glandorf1.joe.wsprnetviewer.app) to retrieve and displays report from www.wsprnet.org. Tapping on a specific report displays more details about it, along with a world map that shows transmitter and receiver locations.

Unfortunately, I don't have a Raspberry Pi, or I'd try this as well. I do have a BeageBone Black, but there doesn't seem to be software that I can download and install as easily as the Raspberry Pi software. That being the case, this might be a good excuse to purchase one of those new, cheaper RPis.

When he's not digging through his junk box or teaching amateur radio classes, KB6NU writes about amateur radio at KB6NU.Com. He has just released The CW Geek's Guide to Having Fun with Morse Code. The book is available on Amazon.Com or on KB6NU.Com.

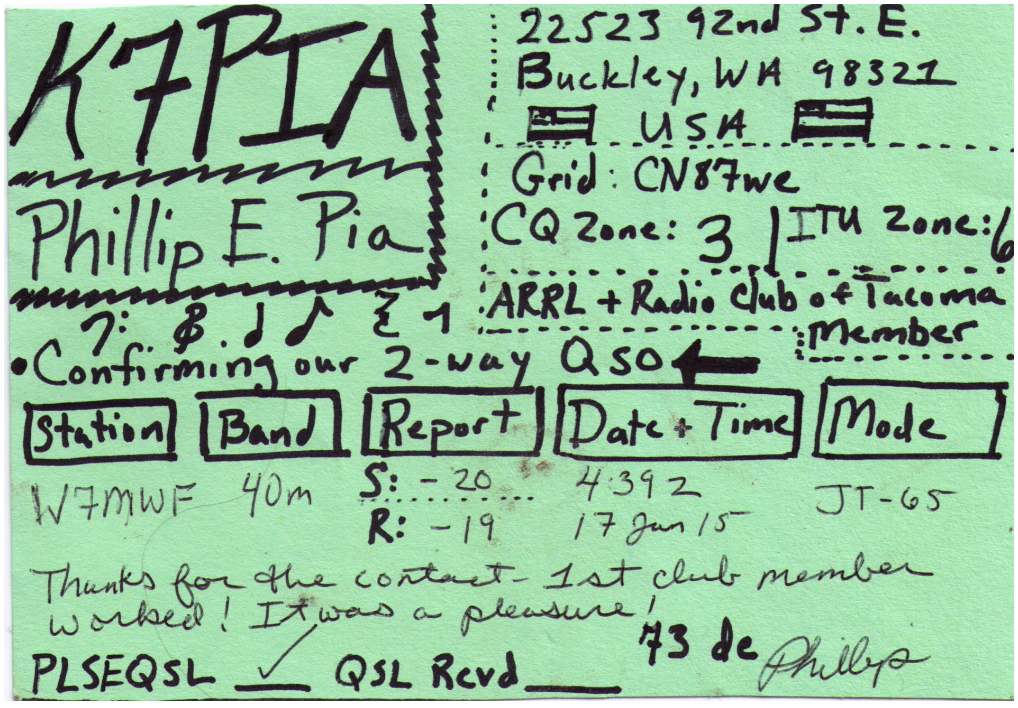
Meaningful Cards

Every once in a while you get a card that commemorates a significant event. Such was the case when I received the below card from club member Phillip K7PIA. It is meaningful to me because I had the privilege to be his first contact with another RCT member!

Most likely you'll find Phillip each weekend up in the HF room making contacts on either phone or on one of the digital modes. And he is a great contributor at special events - Salmon Run, SKN, FYBO - he's always around. To learn more about Phillip, visit his page on qrz.com.

Operator's Wallpaper

If you have any special, or cool, or unique, or simply beautiful QSL cards in your collection that you'd like to share, please scan (high resolution is preferred) and email to the Bark Editor w7dk-news@earthlink.net. If you can't get them scanned, bring them along to the clubhouse on a Saturday , we'll scan them real quick and give them back to you.



The Radio Club of Tacoma's Logger's Bark

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Club Officers

President: Gary McAdams WG7X 253-984-0868 email to wg7x @ w7dk.org
Vice Pres: Mike Mikuchonis email to w7xtz @ w7dk.org
Secretary: Larry Watson KD4VOM email to kd4vom @ w7dk.org
Treasurer: David Andresen W7HTJ email to w7htj @ w7dk.org

5 Board Members (listed in no particular order)

Al Ferguson N7OMS email to n7oms @ w7dk.org
Nick Winter K7MO email to k7mo @ w7dk.org
Bruce Hanson WE7P email to we7p @ w7dk.org
Mike Elwell W7GHW email to w7ghw@w7dk.org
Mike Finnie W7MWF email to w7mwf@w7dk.org

Logger's Bark Staff

Editor "Stop the Presses!!" Mike Finnie, W7MWF email to w7dk-news @ earthlink.net
Proofreader Extraordinaire "Don't rely on SpellChecker!" Bob Jamison KE7WPK
Contributors: The members of the Radio Club of Tacoma…
Send articles to: w7dk-news @ earthlink.net or Bark, 1506 N Stevens St, Tacoma, WA 98406

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Membership Info: **FULL (licensed) and ASSOCIATE (non licensed) is $30 per calendar year. $25 for Licensed Seniors (65 and over). Licensed family members at same address pay $15 each for the first two and are free for the third, fourth, and so on. Fulltime students, licensed or non licensed, up to age 25 are $15 per year. Note: fees are applicable for the calendar year: Jan to Dec. Lifetime membership is 20 times the yearly fee you are eligible for.. Lifetime memberships are calculated based on the FULL and ASSOCIATE rates.**

Radio Club Repeaters

Central Tacoma: 147.280 + PL=103.5
Crawford Mountain (SE Thurston County): 147.380 + PL=103.5
Central Tacoma: 440.625 + PL=103.5
North Tacoma: 145.21 – PL=141.3

Remember - For the latest and most current information on events and activities, visit the Radio Club of Tacoma Website w7dk.org. Be sure to enroll as a member to see all the info.

The Loggers Bark
Radio Club of Tacoma
PO Box 11188
Tacoma, WA 98411

Upcoming RCT Events

REGULAR EVENTS

Club Meetings: Second Wednesday of the month at the Library Administration Building 112th and Waller Road. The club meets at 7:30 PM. Everyone is invited to attend.

Workshops: Fourth Wednesday of the month at the Clubhouse, 1249 So. Washington St, Tacoma. A variety of training and educational events will be conducted.

Board Meeting: First Wednesday of the month at the RCT clubhouse. All members are welcome to attend .

Bark Deadline: Last week-end of each month. Please submit articles by that time!

Check into the weekly two meter net: Tuesdays at 7:30 PM on the club repeater on 147.280 MHz

Check into the weekly 10 meter net: Sundays at 8:00 PM on 28.375 MHz .

SPECIAL EVENTS

Mike and Key Swap Meet March 7, 2015 Puyallup Fairgrounds

End of Grace Period for Dues Renewal March 31, 2015